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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY USSR/International
 SUBJECT Reported Lifting of Long-Range Radio Telephone Restrictions on Contact with US Amateur Radio Operators/Use of English Language for Call Identification within the USSR/Correlation of DXers and Regional Activities
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SUPP. TO
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1. At a meeting [in the US] of long-distance radio telephone operators [DXers] very recently, grapevine rumor which had come to the attention of most of us separately was confirmed ([redacted]) by joint discussion and a general comparison of notes. In May 1954, the USSR is going to lift their restrictions on long-distance radio and radio telephone communication by Soviet "hams" with those in the western world, particularly the US. [redacted] the exact channel for this information, but [redacted] occurred in the following general manner. DXers throughout the world have a strong common bond of technical interest and personality characteristics. To an extent at least, there is always an interest not only in accomplishing as many successful contacts as possible by radio or radio-telephone (as the case may be), but in passing on information pertinent to the technical improvement or general operation of this world-wide net of amateur radio enthusiasts. With this motivation, some "ham" within the USSR advised some other "ham" in Czechoslovakia or another Iron Curtain country that the Soviet ban on contact with the West and the US is scheduled to be relaxed in May /1954/. The "ham" in a satellite in turn passed the information on to someone in the West, and the news was spread rapidly to more and more long-distance radio operators.
 [Collector's Note: [redacted] believes he might be able to trace at least one successive channel for this information back to an Iron Curtain Satellite source, but not back to an original operator in the USSR.]
2. For some years, of course, USSR DXers have been communicating within the USSR, during contests, in the English language. This is not as surprising as it may seem to the uninitiated. The Soviet amateur long-distance radio telephone enthusiast is very much like his opposite number in any other country, in that he regards international contests as a "giant, king-size game", which definitely separates the men from the boys. The technical capability of these specialists and their equipment is nowhere better tested than in the regularly held international

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contests to see how many different countries can be contacted in a given time interval. (It is not unlike the purposes underlying, and the results achieved from the Indianapolis 500-mile race in the US automotive world). Accordingly, since the Soviet Government has told their amateurs that they cannot talk with US hams, the Soviet amateurs have set up their own long-distance contests within the Soviet orbit. Since the objective of these contests is to contact as many different areas as possible, speed is of the essence and conversations are kept to the minimum required for adequate identification, records which can be officially confirmed, etc. Since Soviet DXers are accustomed to quick communication in English from previous contests before the ban, they have continued to intercommunicate in English within the USSR and Soviet orbit.

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These conversations have been limited to identification by code symbols; comments relative to signal strength, clarity of reception, etc; and perhaps a first name conversational identification. [REDACTED] never heard any additional conversational comments or remarks of possible intelligence value. If the Soviet DXers are following the published international lists of station call numbers and their location, then the geographical location of most of their stations is known. If they chose to confuse call numbers and the published location of stations, this would be difficult or impossible for hams to spot from the US, since it would require more precise direction-finding antennae than is available to the ordinary DXer.

3. Interestingly, it is known that there is a definite correlation between the number of DXers or high-powered radio stations in an area and the technical "goings on" within that area. A correlation curve can in fact be developed between the location of such stations and the presence of activities requiring engineers, electronics specialists, and physicists -- for these are the specialists most active in amateur long-range radio-telephone communication. Since the operation of these stations calls for a good deal of technical capability and equipment, this fact in itself demonstrates a high level of capability on the part of the operator. And since "ham" activities are normally extra-curricular, the operator is of course utilizing his professional capabilities somewhere nearby. To illustrate, in 1946-47,

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[REDACTED] (without any checking with other DX operators) noted a considerable number of new QO-5 prefixes, indicating the establishment of five or six new DX stations in the Leopoldville area of the Belgian Congo. Knowing of the correlation between DX station operators and industrial or technical research activities, it was of course easy to quickly spot the general degree of activity and the importance of the mining of fissionable materials somewhere near Leopoldville. [REDACTED] there is no reason why this general correlation is not equally true for the USSR. The transfer of particular stations and operators from one area to another, or their concentration would seem to me to have definite implications, as a cause for intelligence curiosity and perhaps also as a partial confirmation of other inconclusive indicators or rumors.

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4. The reported relaxation of the Soviet ban on DX communication with the US in the near future, may also, of course, have some military, training, or even intelligence significance. [REDACTED] well known fact that in the US, the military services are the "hams' best friend. Were it not for their recognition of the wartime (auxiliary communication net) and peacetime (training and technical development) importance of "hams", the frequencies assigned for amateur use would long ago have been taken away by the governmental communication agencies, responding to pressure exerted through Congress by commercial communications companies who would like to have the amateur frequencies themselves. Therefore, [REDACTED] if the Soviet military services are involved in the lifting of the ban, perhaps wishing to further develop the same type of benefits beloved desirable by the US military services.

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